

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Gain your horse's affection by respecting his space.

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How would you feel if a friend were to walk into your house at any hour of the day or night, without knocking, and went straight into your bedroom to start moving furniture around? My guess is you'd be a little upset. Yet, we do this to our horses' space all the time when we simply walk into the stall and get to work!

Instead, next time you approach the stall, notice when your horse notices you – and stop. Wait for at least seven seconds. Notice his reaction – my bet is that he'll be a little bit curious, but he might just turn away. Ouch! What does that tell you about your relationship? Continue to approach the stall, but wait at the gate for your horse to approach you – this might take the whole 10 minutes or longer, depending on your relationship. Let him touch his nose to your hand first, rather than reaching out to give him a pat, and count to 30, 40 or even 60. Then step inside, slowly give your horse a friendly touch all over and leave. Do this for seven days in a row and note the reaction. Your horse is probably going to greet you at the gate, confident that you're not just there to put him to work!

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